

THE BIBLE YEAR (2023-2024)  
Class #14: THE PSALMS - #2 (Tehillim)

**OPENING** Prayer/Introductions/Questions

**REVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT**

**OVERVIEW OF THE PSALMS**

**LESSON: PSALMS**

- Psalm 43
  - Psalm of Lament
  - Yeshua
  - Abraham Heschel (vol.1, p. 198)
  
- Psalm 113
  - Hallel Psalms (113-118)
  - Inclusio: Hallelujah
  
- Psalm 100
  - Music In Ancient Israel
  - Imperatives
  - Hesed

**NEXT WEEK:** Proverbs/The Writings (TaNaK = Torah, Navim, Ketuvim)

**CLOSING**

## MUSIC IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

<u>Occasion</u>	<u>Scriptural Reference</u>		
Family Parties	Genesis 31:27	(Luke 15:25)	
Praise of Heroes	Judges 11:34	I Samuel 18:6	
Harem and Court	2 Samuel 19:35	Ecclesiastes 2:8	
Banquet and Feast	Isaiah 5:2	Isaiah 24:8-9	
Occupational Songs	Numbers 21:17	Judges 9:27	Isaiah 16:10
Dirges and Laments	2 Samuel 1:17-18	2 Chronicles 35:25	(Matthew 9:23)
Magic Incantations	Exodus 28:35	Joshua 6:4-20	1 Sameul 16:6ff

### Music in worship was basically divided into 3 types:

1. The frenzied songs of the prophetic guilds.  
(1 Samuel 10:5-6)
2. References and ordinances in the Priestly code of Leviticus and Numbers  
(Enthronement Psalms: Judges 7:18-20; 1 Kings 1:39-40; 2 Chronicles 13:14)
3. The organized songs, chants, liturgy, and psalms of the temple and the professional Levitic musicians.  
(Leviticus)

To begin, the music of early Israel sprung out of their daily life around family, friends, work, and worship. Then music was an intricate part of daily life, not as today when there is a time to sing and make music. In the ancient world, music pervaded the whole of life, all human concerns from birth to death.

Professional musicianship took form with the coming of the monarchy (900 B.C) especially David (2 Chronicles 7). From this period, the art of singing was diligently taught (1 Chronicles 25). The musical training of a Levitical singer took at least 5 years of intensive preparation!

Israel was famous throughout the ancient world for their singing and music. Assyrian Kings who conquered Israel required of her not only precious metals, but musicians for tribute. Psalm 137 records that the Babylonians required their Hebrew prisoners to sing for them. To show interest in the folk music of a vanquished enemy is a testimony in itself!

# THE BIBLE YEAR (2023-2024)

## **Class #15: PROVERBS**

(The Writings)

OPENING Prayer/Introductions/Questions

REVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT

OVERVIEW OF THE PROVERBS (Dr. James Limburg)

LESSON: PROVERBS

- Proverbs 1
  - Titles
  - Yadah - To know
  - Fear in the Old Testament (filial)
  - Shema Yisrael
  
- Proverbs 3
  - Audience of Proverbs (primary)
  - Woman Wisdom
  
- Proverbs 8:1-6; 22-36
  - Personification of Wisdom
  - Hebrew Poetry - acrostic, similies, riddles
  - Creation/Logos
  - Karma
  - Necromancy
  
- Proverbs 22
  
- Appendixes: Proverbs 30-31
  - Dialogue of a sceptic and a believer

NEXT WEEK: The Writings (TaNaK = Torah, Navim, Ketuvim)

CLOSING

# THE BIBLE YEAR (2023-2024)

## Class #15: PROVERBS

(The Writings)

OPENING Prayer/Introductions/Questions - proverbs you grew up with...

### REVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE PROVERBS** (Dr. James Limburg)

The book of Proverbs is a collection of essays, poems, and sayings expressing the wisdom of ancient Israel. Some of the material probably originated as folk wisdom, circulating in the family or the clan. Other parts reflect the life of the royal court. Arrangement began during the time of Solomon (about 961-922 B.C.E.), and the final edition was likely produced during the exile in Babylon (about 587-539 B.C.E.).

One does not need to deal with the big questions each day, like the meaning of life or the problem of evil or why bad things happen to good people. In day by day living there are all sorts of smaller questions: How should I handle my financial affairs? How should I relate to friends and colleagues? What about falling in love? What can I do to maintain a healthy marriage? How can I responsibly help the poor? These are the sorts of things that the book of Proverbs can help with. If the major theme in the Psalms is the praise of God in heaven, the chief concern of Proverbs is the pursuit of a happy and good life on earth.

The book of Proverbs is a manual for conducting one's everyday affairs in a manner that is happy and successful in worldly matters and responsible before God.

#### HOW DO I READ IT?

Proverbs lends itself to being read a chapter a day, matching the number of the day of the month (there are 31 chapters). The short sayings should be taken individually, like a variety of expensive chocolates in a gift box. Some may be enjoyed and savored; others can be swallowed quickly or even skipped over.

#### James Limburg **Introductory Issues in Proverbs**

Alphabetical acrostic

Autobiographical stylizing (24:30-34)

"Better x than y" statements

Some of these forms were likely invented just for the sheer aesthetic delight, much as one might enjoy composing limericks or rhymes.

"What is better than a house full of feasting with strife?" and a pupil answering, "A dry morsel with quiet."

#### **Gender issues**

Instruction or imperative speeches

Numerical sayings in the form x, x+1

These were also probably composed for aesthetic delight; see 6:16-19; 30:15b-16; 18-19; 21-23; "Name three or four things that are small but wise" (30:24-28). Or "Name three or four things that evoke wonder" (30:18-19). Discussions would easily follow.

Riddles

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow?...Who has redness of eyes?" (23:29).

## Similes

A tip for interpreting similes (comparisons using “like” or “as”): begin by concentrating on the “like” half of the saying (“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout” 11:22

## LESSON: PROVERBS

- [Proverbs 1:2-7](#) nicely sets forth the purpose of the entire book. Here is instruction intended for the young, but also for senior citizens (vv. 4-5), teaching the art of “steersmanship” (1:5; NRSV, “skill”), that is, providing instruction on how to navigate the ship of life through the world with its delights and dangers. The Greek Old Testament uses the word *kybernesis* here, from which we get the English “cybernetics,” meaning “control, steer.” Gerhard von Rad has wisely written:
- These maxims, saturated as they are by experience, resemble buoys set out on the sea by which one can find one’s position. Herder says very shrewdly that one has not to learn “from” such maxims, but “with their help.”...And people had also to learn how to manage money, and their own bodies and—what was hardest of all—their tongue, which had no less than life and death in its power (Prov. XVIII.21). (Old Testament Theology, vol. 1,

# THE BIBLE YEAR

(Class #16)

## ECCLESIASTES

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

WHO/WHAT/WHEN

### Introductory Issues in Ecclesiastes

Bonhoeffer on Ecclesiastes

Hevel ("vanity," NRSV)

Jewish use of the book

Luther on Ecclesiastes

### Outline of Ecclesiastes

1. Author and Theme (Ecclesiastes 1:1-2)
2. The Search for Meaning (Ecclesiastes 1:3-2:26)
3. Who Knows? (Ecclesiastes 3)
4. Earthly Matters (Ecclesiastes 4)
5. Heavenly Matters (Ecclesiastes 5)
6. Death (Ecclesiastes 6-7)
7. The Limits of Human Understanding (Ecclesiastes 8)
8. How Then Should Life Be Lived? (Ecclesiastes 9-12)

CLOSING/NEXT MEETING

THE BIBLE YEAR  
(Class #17)  
**Song of Songs**

Summary (Who/What/When/Why/How)

Introductory Issues in Song of Songs

Outline of Song of Songs

1. The Song of Songs (Song of Solomon 1:1)
2. The Two Lovers Appear (Song of Songs 1:2-2:7)
3. Seeking the Beloved (Song of Songs 2:8-3:5)
4. A Royal Wedding (Song of Songs 3:6-11)
5. The Man in Praise of His Lover (Song of Songs 4:1-5:1)
6. Love's Challenges (Song of Songs 5:2-6:3)
7. Mutual Longings (Song of Songs 6:4-13)
8. Love That Lasts Forever (Song of Songs 7:1—8:7)
9. Concluding Dialogue (Song of Songs 8:8-14)

Background - How did it get into the Bible?

Allegorical and Other Interpretive Questions

Closing/Next Meeting